

The Crusades: Crescent & The Cross

For thousands of years, the holy lands of the Middle East have been the focus of intense political conflict. These lands have been the sites wars of epic proportion between three of the great religions of the world – Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The deepest crevasse in these territories was created in wars between Christians and Muslims that began with extreme sacrifice in the name of Christ and Mohammed. At stake for the followers of both religions was the sacred land of Jerusalem, and control over the broader region surrounding it. Of all Middle Eastern cities in the Middle Ages, Jerusalem has suffered from the most troubling past. For Jews, it was the site of the Temples of Herod and Solomon, to Muslims, it was the city where Mohammed ascended to heaven and to the Christians it was the city where Jesus Christ, their Messiah, was crucified. What happened to the Holy City? Who could attempt such a war of such widespread, yet personal fanaticism, let alone win one?

The violent past of Jerusalem began with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the time that Christianity laid its foundation in the city. After 400 years of Roman occupation, Jerusalem saw Christianity become the leading political and religious force. However, in the 7th century, the Holy City was seized by leaders holding a different faith, Islam. Over the course of several hundred years, a series of wars raged throughout this region. Though these wars always carried elements of religious conflict, they were chiefly battles to establish territorial control of these highly coveted lands. Through viewing the *Crescent and the Cross*, students will be able to build their knowledge of this vital era in world history and will discover the complex reasons why so many millions of people were willing to give their lives in the service of these wars.

The Crusades: Crescent & The Cross details the history of Jerusalem from the Roman leadership in the time of Christ through the Islamic- lead years to the heroic warriors and tragic stories of three chaotic and devastating Crusades. Spanning hundreds of years and in the name of almighty leaders' ideals, the Crusades were carried out by zealous popes, kings, warriors, knights, men, women and children. Their personal stories of leadership, triumph, heroics and demise will be chronologically detailed, revealing an accurate and captivating portrayal of the infamous Crusades. Also, with expert opinions, interviewees from all different faiths, translated scripts, maps of cities, trips to ancient battlefields and castles, and extensive reenactments, the world's most infamous conflict of religious zeal, fanaticism, and violence comes to life.

Footnotes to History

WERE YOU AWARE that until the 12th Century, when Crusaders returned from the Middle East with knowledge of them, windmills were generally unknown to Europeans? Thereafter, they became prevalent in England, France, Germany and Holland.

Vocabulary

Using the dictionary at www.merriamwebster.com, an internet resource such as www.history.com, or an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms:

Admonish
Arduous
Bereft
Calamitous
Cognizant
Empathetic
Insolence
Jocund
Meander
Pestilence
Reverberate
Seize
Zeal

Comprehension Questions

1. Why did the Crusades begin? What was so important about Jerusalem? Who was in control of it at the end of the 11th century? What did Pope Urban II have to do with the First Crusade?
2. Briefly explain the relationship between Urban II and Emperor Alexis I. Though devout enemies, was it surprising that they united under their religion? Why would Urban II agree to help Alexis?
3. When the Crusades arrived outside Constantinople, why was Emperor Alexis I furious? What was he expecting to receive when he called for aid from Urban II? What did Alexis finally do? How did he eventually “manipulate” Duke Godfrey of Guillon and his brother Baldwin?
4. Why did the Crusaders want to seize Antioch prior to moving on toward Jerusalem? What would have been the likely result if they had not taken Antioch? How did Bohemond finally make entry into Antioch, fostering the eventual Christian takeover?
5. How did the Crusaders take Jerusalem in the First Crusade? In what year? What tools (of divine intervention, perhaps) helped them overcome the massive walls that surrounded the city? Was the First Crusade a success? Explain.
6. What is a Jihad? Was Jihad founded after the First Crusade? What is a Crusade? Are meanings of Jihad and Crusade the same today as they were prior in the 11th century?
7. What were the 2 competing Muslim doctrines in the 12th century? How did they differ? Did the two sides agree to fight together or were they deeply divided? Why did city states appear in the Muslim world after the fall of Jerusalem?
8. Who were the Knights of Templar and the Hospitallers? What was their role in

the Crusader army after the First Crusade?

9. Who was Zengi? Why was his takeover of Edessa so important to the Muslims?

10. Who was Saladin? What was his strategy prior to attacking the Crusaders? Why did he think his strategy was so vital to the livelihood of Muslim success?

11. Why was the Third Crusade launched? Who called for it? When did it begin?

12. Who is Richard I? How did he become known as Richard the Lionheart? Why did Richard turn back prior to attacking Jerusalem on the Third Crusade?

13. Discuss the extremely violent behavior of the three Crusades. Was one side more barbaric than the other? What did the continual massacres of innocent people do to the opposing side? *Note: Discuss Richard the Lionheart's massacre at Acre in your answer.